

CALFED BAY-DELTA WATERSHED PROGRAM

BDAC Watershed Work Group Meeting Summary

The first Bay-Delta Advisory Council (BDAC) Watershed Work Group Meeting was held on August 19, 1998, in Chico, CA. The BDAC Watershed Work Group (Work Group) was created to address the public's request to have more participation in the CALFED Watershed Program (Watershed Program). The Work Group provides a forum for stakeholders covering a broad geographic area and wide array of interests. Attendees of the Work Group meetings have direct interaction with the Watershed Program's Interagency Watershed Advisory Team (IWAT) and an opportunity to review and comment on Watershed Program draft documents. In addition, the Work Group will provide input to the BDAC on issues related to the Watershed Program.

Introductions

The co-chairs of the Work Group, Martha Davis (BDAC/Sierra Nevada Alliance) and Robert Meacher (BDAC/Regional Council for Rural Counties) began the meeting with introductions. A list of meeting participants is included (Attachment A). The following meeting materials were distributed: *Agenda*; *Program Goals and Objectives (draft)*; *Developing a Draft Preferred Program Alternative (draft)*; and *Draft Preferred Program Alternative - 30 Year Policy Framework*.

Overview/Update of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program

Steve Ritchie (CALFED) presented an overview and update of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program (CALFED Program). The CALFED Program is comprised of 15 federal and state agencies who, along with Bay-Delta stakeholders, collaboratively seek to develop a long-term comprehensive plan that will restore ecological health and improve water management for beneficial uses of the Bay-Delta. The CALFED Program includes six common program elements: Ecosystem Restoration; Water Quality; Water Use Efficiency; Levee System Integrity; Water Transfers; and the recently developed Watershed Program. Various work groups have been established to assist the common programs in the development of their elements. The work groups allow for a variety of interest groups to interact to balance program elements and develop solutions to important issues.

The entire CALFED Program is actually a "watershed program" of sorts. Many watershed activities will take place and fall under the Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP), the Water Quality Program (WQP), and of course, the Watershed Program. However, watershed activities in the upper watersheds and in the Bay Area are largely addressed in the Watershed Program.

Schedule

The Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (Draft PEIS/EIR) describing the three alternatives was released in March 1998, with the six common

program plans/strategies attached as appendices. Over 2,000 public comments were received during the comment period which closed July 1, 1998.

A final draft will be distributed for public comment in December 1998. These documents will include the final draft preferred alternative as well as the final drafts of all six common program plans. The internal deadline, however, for these drafts is October 23, 1998. Because the Watershed Program is newly developed, the IWAT and Work Group is on a fast track to catch up to the progress level of the other common programs and meet the deadlines.

The final draft will then go through a comment period and in late 1999, the federal government will sign the Record of Decision (ROD) on the Final PEIS/EIR.

Watershed Work Group and IWAT

Martha Davis and Robert Meacher explained that the purpose of the Work Group is to assist CALFED in developing an effective and useful Watershed Program. In doing so, the Work Group will provide advice to the IWAT and to the BDAC. Although the Work Group will be working to meet the program schedule, continued refinement of the Watershed Program will be needed after the October deadline. The co-chairs charged the Work Group to unite, weave their voices together, and move the Watershed Program forward.

Judy Heath explained the history of the Watershed Program and the IWAT. The IWAT has met over ten times during the last six months to discuss and strategize the development of the Watershed Program. The result of these efforts are various draft documents which aide in the progression of the Watershed Program. These documents include the Goals and Objectives; Criteria for Watershed Activities; and Stage I Implementation Actions. In addition, the IWAT is working with the CALFED Monitoring Assessment and Reporting Program (CMARP) to develop a Watershed Program monitoring framework which will be integrated with monitoring efforts of the other programs. Other IWAT activities include identifying assurances; defining linkages and integrating with other common programs; and refining the Watershed Program Plan (formerly referred to as Watershed Management Strategy).

Work Group Comments

The following are general comments presented by the Work Group and IWAT.

- A meeting participant stated that it would be beneficial to the Work Group to be able to see the result of their efforts and comments by receiving an end product. It was agreed by the CALFED staff that the Work Group meeting participants will receive a copy of the Final Draft of the Watershed Program Plan which will be released in December 1998.
- Further clarification regarding the relationship of the Watershed Management Strategy (Strategy) and the Goals and Objectives document was requested. Judy Heath explained that the Strategy was intended to lay out a broad framework of the Watershed Program. The Goals and Objectives document complements the framework by describing the intent of the Watershed Program. The Strategy will be further refined over the next two

months, with the help of the Work Group, and developed as the Watershed Program Plan which will be a technical appendix to the Final Draft PEIS/EIR.

- A question was raised regarding certification of watershed groups by CALFED. Judy Heath explained that the Watershed Program has no intentions of certifying or replacing existing watershed groups. The intent is to help coordinate watershed efforts through collaboration and integration.
- A concern was raised as to the timeline established for the Watershed Program. It was stated that because the Watershed Program is an important element of the CALFED Program, it should not be pressured to produce an entire program plan in such a short amount of time. Steve Ritchie explained that although the Watershed Program element is fairly new, the overall CALFED Program has progressed for some time. Although the CALFED Program must move forward, it is important to note that all decisions made will be programmatic in nature and allow for adaptive management.
- It was asked by a meeting participant if CALFED was aware of all of the watershed activities that currently exist. Judy Heath replied that the Watershed Program is attempting to outreach to all watershed groups within the CALFED geographic area. In addition, coordination with watershed clearinghouses is an objective of the Watershed Program. This collaboration will further enable CALFED to learn of other existing watershed activities.
- A question was raised regarding how CALFED will quantify additional yield of water downstream and timing functions. A reply by the IWAT stated that CALFED will not attempt to quantify these benefits, only recognize that they are indeed a benefit to the Bay-Delta system.
- A comment was noted regarding the lack of interfacing of local communities with the Watershed Program. A meeting participant stated that there needs to be a stronger connection between these two, especially regarding growth, rural/urban interactions, and land use. The IWAT agreed with the statement and noted that they are working towards bridging this gap. For instance, Russ Henly (IWAT) is working with the American River Watershed Group on issues related to growth concerns. It was also suggested that the Watershed Program should address the need for watershed groups to work and coordinate with each other.
- A discussion was raised with the comment that CALFED should define what constitutes a “watershed group.” It was pointed out that many watershed groups may be formed in the future with the hopes of receiving CALFED funding for various projects. Some participants expressed the opinion that there may be a lack of credibility and scrutiny with some groups, therefore, CALFED should clearly state what comprises a watershed group/program. On the other hand, it was suggested that if a watershed group meets the goals and objectives set forth by the Watershed Program, they should be able to participate. Furthermore, CALFED should not limit the development of creative ideas by anyone, but instead establish a criteria for participation in the Watershed Program. In

addition, it was recommended that the Watershed Program could be inclusive, yet have some screening, by using a framework similar to the Proposition 204 proposals which integrates watershed activities with that of county government. It was further suggested to have a “sponsor” for project applications; county governments or their designee could fill that role.

- A discussion was raised regarding the allocation of funding for watershed *planning* versus watershed *projects*. It was recommended that the majority of funds be directed towards the implementation of watershed projects. It was further suggested that a maximum amount of money be allotted for overhead of watershed groups so that most of the money is allocated to “on the ground” watershed projects.
- Another suggestion made was to clarify that the Watershed Program is based solely on volunteer efforts. However, Judy Heath stated that CALFED may take a passive role and solicit watershed activities in areas where efforts are needed, but are not developed due to lack of coordination. In these instances, CALFED may assist local communities in developing watershed activities. Because of this possibility it was decided not to change the language.
- A question was raised whether the Southern California and Trinity River watersheds would be included in the Watershed Program. A further discussion took place regarding the meaning of the word “natural” as described in the document entitled *Developing a Draft Preferred Alternative* (page 30: “The watershed program encompasses all *natural* watersheds to the Bay-Delta system”).
- A comment was made that additional storage of water should be a goal of the CALFED Program. Steve Ritchie replied that although water storage is not a CALFED goal, per se, both groundwater and surface water storage, coupled with water management measures, may be used as a tool to reach the goals and objectives of the CALFED Program.
- It was noted that desalination programs have not been addressed by CALFED. The Work Group co-chairs responded that the Work Group meeting was not the right forum to address this issue. It was suggested that the comment be raised before the BDAC.

The following additional topics were also raised and briefly discussed. However, it was decided that these issues warrant additional discussion at future Work Group meetings:

- Eligibility for funding through the Watershed Program;
- Use of models to establish prioritization/development of models by local watershed groups;
- Liability issues/regulatory processes;
- Identification of watersheds for inclusion into the Watershed Program;
- Formation of Partnerships (Objective III-B); and
- Long-term funding for monitoring/relationship of CMARP with common programs.

Goals and Objectives

The Work Group reviewed the draft goals and objectives of the Watershed Program. The Work Group suggested specific comments and revisions to the language of the document; these comments are illustrated on a “redlined-strike out” version of the document (enclosed).

Future Meetings

The following date for the next Work Group meeting was agreed upon. Please note that a meeting location has also been decided upon:

**BDAC Watershed Work Group Meeting
September 2, 1998
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Department of Fish and Game/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Main Conference Room
4001 North Wilson Way
Stockton, CA**

The following dates for the upcoming BDAC Watershed Public Workshops were agreed upon. Please note that meeting locations have also been decided upon:

**BDAC Watershed Public Workshop
September 9, 1998
6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
University of California Cooperative Extension
Auditorium
420 South Wilson Way
Stockton, CA**

and

**BDAC Watershed Public Workshop
September 15, 1998
6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Shasta College
800 Building (Social Sciences) - Room 806
11555 Old Oregon Trail
Redding, CA**

ATTACHMENT A

Meeting Participants:

Aumack, Laurie	Battle Creek Watershed Project
Barris, Lynn	Butte Environmental Council/Cherokee Creek
Benedict, Chuck and Geri	Butte Creek
Bischel, David	California Forestry Association
Bogener, Dave	Department of Water Resources
Bowker, Dennis	Napa County Resource Conservation District
Bundy, Burt	Mill Creek Conservancy
Carter, Kristin	Environmental Resource Program
Cornwall, Caitlin	Sonoma Ecology Center
Davis, Fred	Butte County
Davis, Martha	BDAC/Sierra Nevada Alliance
Dennis, Tess	California Farm Bureau
Dolan, Jane	Butte County Supervisor
Dunn, Keith	Congressman Wally Herger
Eggert, Steve	
Garvey, Shawn	South Yuba River Citizens League
Giacomini, Pam	Rancher/Hat Creek Landowner
Ginney, E.M.	Butte Creek Watershed Project
Grimes, Russ	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Harthorn, Allen	Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy
Heath, Judy	CALFED Bay-Delta Program
Heffren, Don	Western Canal
Heiman, Dennis	Regional Water Quality Control Board - Redding
Henly, Russ	IWAT/California Department of Forestry
Holland, Constance	SRPT
Holt, Buford	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Holtgrieve, Don	California State University
Hulbert, Susan	The Nature Conservancy
Jungwirth, Lynn	Watershed Center
Knecht, Mary Lee	CALFED Consultant Team/Jones & Stokes Associates
Lossius, Bob	Lake County Department of Public Works
Lowrie, John	IWAT/Natural Resource Conservation Service
Madison, Mary	UC Davis
McClure, Bob	Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy
McKinley, Keith	
Meacher, Robert	BDAC/Regional Council of Rural Counties
Merriman, Bill	Lake County Board of Supervisor
Merz, John	Sacramento River Preservation Trust
Nakamara, Gary	Shasta-Tehama Bioregional Council
Napper, Gregory	Lassen National Forest
Newlin, Vickie	Butte County Water
Richardson, Bill	University of California Cooperative Extension

Ritchie, Steve
Saracino, Anthony
Sime, Fraser
Spurlock, Hank
Stewart, Frank
Trott, Chris
Tupper, Julie
Vieg, Brendan
Volke, Russ
Ward, Paul
Wills, Leah
Winship, George
Wolan, Otis

CALFED Bay-Delta Program
Consultant
Department of Water Resources - Red Bluff

California Biomass Energy Alliance
U.S. Forest Service
Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy
U.S. Forest Service
California Department of Fish and Game
Plumas Corporation
Senator K. Maurice Johannessen
Plumas County Water Agency